Body exhumed said Oswald's

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DALLAS (AP) — Pathologists on Sunday identified the body buried in Lee Harvey Oswald's grave as that of the suspected assassin of President John F. Kennedy, ending 18 years of speculation and court battles.

"We both individually and as a team have concluded beyond any doubt — and I mean beyond any doubt — that the individual buried under the name Lee Harvey Oswald in Rose Hill Cemetery is Lee Harvey Oswald," said Dr. Linda Norton, head of the pathology team.

The body was exhumed at Rose Hill Burial Park here after Oswald's brother, Robert, dropped his opposition to the procedure.

The pathologists took X-rays and made dental impressions to compare the teeth with Oswald's military dental records, and located a mastoidectomy scar referred to in the Marine Corps records but not in the autopsy.

John Collins, lawyer for British author and assassination theorist Michael Eddowes, said the casket contained "just skeletal remains. The casket was so terribly deteriorated it (the body) could not be removed in one piece."

Eddowes, who contended that a Soviet spy was buried in the grave, had sought the exhumation. Marina Oswald Porter, Oswald's widow, did not oppose him.

Mrs. Porter was "pleased with the results of the autopsy ... and glad that the issues have been resolved," said her lawyer, Jerry Pittman. Pittman said she "wants to go forward now and live as normal a life as possible."

"We hope this puts the matter to rest," said Ms. Norton, a former Dallas County medical examiner who now practices in Birmingham, Ala. "We hope the Porters can go about living a normal life without any more speculation. ..."

Authorities said Oswald's body was placed in a new casket and immediately returned to Rose Hill Cemetery after

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Oswald

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pathologists announced their findings. The casket was placed in a new vault, which was lowered into the same grave site as a ring of security guards looked on late Sunday afternoon.

Oswald, suspected of killing Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, was shot to death two days later by Jack Ruby.

Six private security guards ringed the perimeter of the cemetery and no one was allowed inside once the exhumation began about 7 a.m. Two Fort Worth police officers also were on hand.

Thirty curious people peered over a fence and news helicopters hovered overhead, breaking the early morning silence of the eastside neighborhood.

The casket, draped with a white sheet, was loaded onto a hearse and taken to Baylor University Medical Center for the examination.

The exhumation will be paid for by Eddowes. Sources estimated the cost at between $8,000 and $15,000.